

16 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

**SUBJECT: Conversation with William Woodruff, on the staff of the
Senate Appropriations Committee, on Senator Nelson's
Request for a Briefing on Soviet and ChiCom Threats**

1. In a conversation with William Woodruff, on the staff of the Senate Appropriations Committee, today I indicated that Arnold Brustin, of Senator Nelson's staff, had requested a briefing of the Senator on the Russian and ChiCom threats and I told Woodruff that the Director was disposed not to provide the briefing primarily on the basis that the line had to be drawn somewhere on congressional requests for personal briefings on the ABM programs. Woodruff commented that he thought this was a rather crooked line and referred to the fact that we had briefed a number of members on this subject both last year and this year and he saw no basis for distinction between Senator Nelson and other Senators such as Cooper, Baker, and others whom we have briefed.

2. Woodruff was most sympathetic to the Director's problem on this issue and said that Senator Russell had commented to him that he planned to talk with Mr. Helms (probably next week) on a number of things. Woodruff felt that the Director might bring this subject up at that time. I had previously mentioned to Woodruff that we had received a request from Senator Gore's Disarmament Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for a briefing on 23 April 1969 and that the Director had agreed to give it. In trying to find a solution to the Nelson request, Woodruff said we might suggest to Senator Gore that he invite Senator Nelson to attend this briefing (Woodruff realizes that this is not a solution to the overall problem but might provide an answer in Senator Nelson's case.) Woodruff expressed concern that the Director might make a number of enemies in the Senate if he refused briefings and he was also concerned that Senators like Nelson could use the fact they were refused briefings on the subject to their advantage when the safeguard issue is debated on the Senate floor. He felt that Senator Nelson could say he must be right in opposing the program, since CIA refused to give him the true facts.

3. Woodruff felt that Senator Russell would advise the Director to brief Senator Nelson and any other Senators who make a similar request. He emphasized that he thought it was important for the Director to be consistent in the handling of these requests rather than to make ad hoc decisions.

4. Woodruff suggested that these briefings might be in the form of a "canned briefing" by someone in a senior (but not executive) position in the Agency who would provide the facts on the issue but who would not likely be the target of theoretical discussions on the ramifications of the facts.

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Deputy Legislative Counsel

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